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May 2017

MAGAZINE

Kidney donor helps a
stranger in need

CA contest promotes
team cohesion

Deepening the relationship with a longtime friend



Tap Headlines To Navigate

Features

INL Office of Anti-Crime Programs

Office fights transnational crime

Enabling Self Defense

FACT course adapts for employees with disabilities

Post of the Month: Mission Ghana

Deepening the relationship with a longtime friend

Greatest Gift

Kidney donor helps a stranger in need

On the Map

CA contest promotes team cohesion

Peace Makers

CSO team aids Department's negotiators



FACT students watch SDOT instructor John Cooper demonstrate hammer-fists strikes on a mannequin.

Photo by Lonnie Harrell

Columns

In the News

Conflict Matters

In Brief

In Memoriam

From the DG

Lying in State

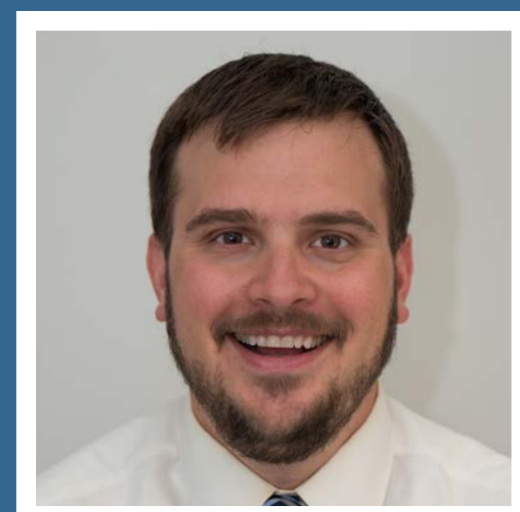
Retirements

End State



On the cover

Fishing boats in Elmina harbor, Ghana. *Photo by Floris van Halm*



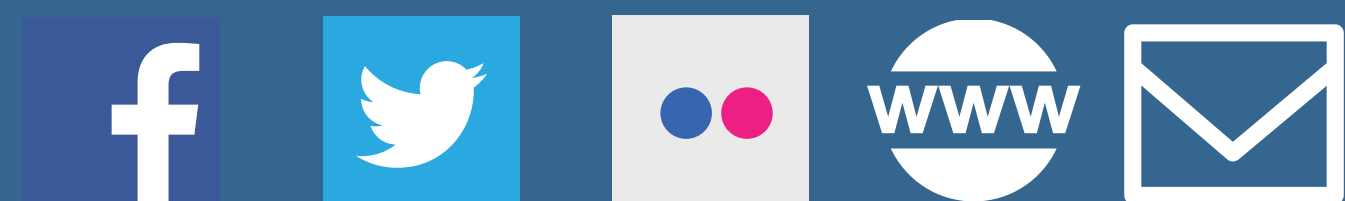
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State Magazine does not purchase freelance material.

Deadlines

The submission deadline for the **July/August issue is June 16.**

The deadline for the **September issue is July 20.**

State Magazine is published monthly, except bimonthly in July and August, by the Bureau of Human Resources at the U.S. Department of State. It is intended for information only and is not authority for official action. Views and opinions expressed are not necessarily those of the Department of State. The editorial team reserves the right to select and edit all materials for publication.

Editorial Contributions

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STATE

MAGAZINE



The Jonathan Scales Fourchestra performs with the Chu-Yin Culture and Arts Troupe in Taitung, Taiwan.

Photo by Jacky Wu

Music Program Celebrates Diversity

In February 2017, the American Institute in Taiwan (AIT) brought the American Music Abroad (AMA) jazz fusion group Jonathan Scales Fourchestra (JSF) to local Taiwan audiences, online and in person.

Since Taiwan has one of the highest rates of Facebook use in the world, AIT used social media to generate buzz for the program and to raise interest. Social media engagement for the AMA Taiwan 2017 tour reached more than 325,000 people and garnered more than 6,000 specific likes and comments. As part of the tour, AIT live-streamed a concert. It also provided a series of videos and other social media offerings, showcasing U.S.-Taiwan ties.

The AMA Taiwan 2017 tour featured an array of local musical groups performing with JSF, and AIT and the Taiwan musicians cross-posted videos of the performances. AIT also partnered with the Taipei Museum of Contemporary Arts (MOCA Taipei) to feature JSF in a downtown rush-hour pop-up show, held outside a busy Taipei metro station. AIT and MOCA Taipei live-streamed the American-style street performance via Facebook Live, reaching more than 100,000 viewers.

To promote AIT and the AMA program, AIT created a Jimmy Fallon-style music video for social media in which AIT officers, including Director Kin Moy, Deputy Director Robert Forden and PAO Joe Bookbinder, played simple percussion instruments to back up the band's musicians at a historical site in Taipei. A popular online news outlet produced and posted a video of the collaboration with the comment that even with toy musical instruments borrowed from kindergartens, it was amazing that the AMA group was still able to make fabulous music. This music video reached more than 50,000 people with 14,000 video views.

The video of JSF playing with AIT staff is on Facebook, as are the pop-up concert's live [broadcast](#) and other AMA [videos](#). ▣



Holding a Google Hangout on the iPad with Office of the Chief Architect colleagues, while standing at the post's Mackenzie entrance's TV set, are, from left, Ninjin Garid, Jenn Stacey, Demian Lamadrid and Bhupendra Lad. *Photo by Chris Winsor*

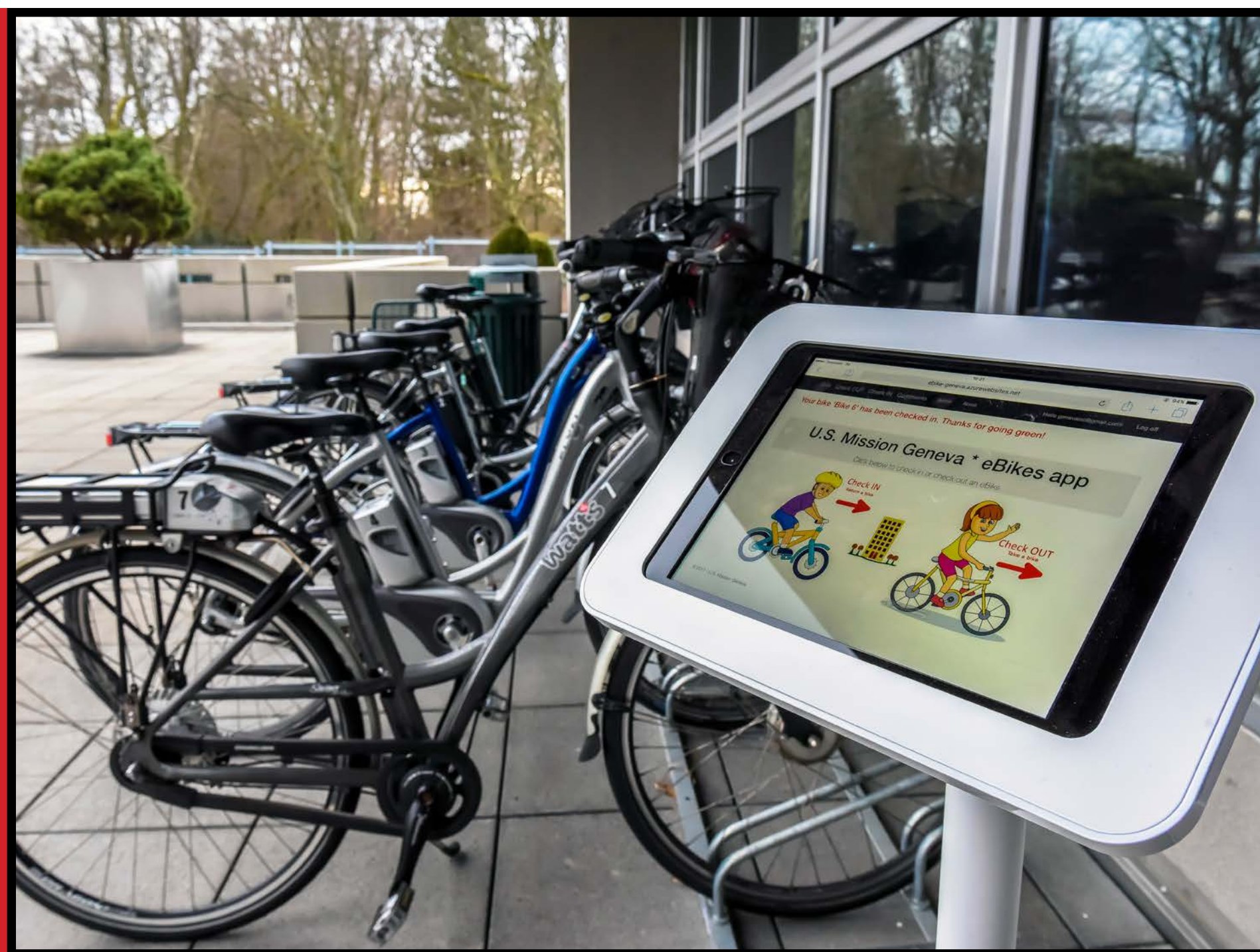
Embassy's Digital Signs Use FAN

The U.S. Embassy Ottawa's Information Resource Management (IRM) team installed a digital signage system that uses the Foreign Affairs Network (FAN), likely a first for any U.S. Embassy. The FAN modernizes and secures the Department's networks, and extends connectivity and services to members of the foreign affairs community. A digital signage system uses flat-screen displays to stream media content. The embassy wanted its signage system to showcase for embassy activities, public outreach and Mission Canada social media content.

The flat screens, at the embassy's entrances, let visitors preview the latest Facebook and Twitter feeds in real time, and learn about embassy events and mission news. Chargé d'Affaires Elizabeth Moore Aubin said the initiative will "create a more open and welcoming environment for our visitors, while giving them a glimpse into what we are doing as a mission."

Digital signage systems can cost from several hundred to several thousand dollars, depending on their complexity, but the embassy team worked with IRM's Office of the Chief Architect (OCA), to customize the FAN at little cost to post. The FAN network provides posts with Google Cloud services. Ottawa's information system officer, Demian Lamadrid, said the development was an important step forward technologically in that the "team quickly realized the many potential uses that Google Cloud services could bring to Mission Canada" to collaborate and share information. To date, the post has more than 130 FAN user accounts.

The team built a Google site to display the content, used Google Sheets to administer social media accounts and held numerous development meetings with OCA via Google Hangouts. To bring content to the TVs, it programmed Chromebits, a small dongle running Google Chrome, securing them behind the TVs. ■



Geneva's Green bikes are ready to go, as is their app.

Photo by Ron Martinez

App Helps Geneva Go Green

The U.S. Mission to the United Nations in Geneva, the first U.S. diplomatic property to install a commercial-class solar power system (2005), has taken another environmental step forward. Its Green Team has worked with local Bureau of Information Resource Management staff to develop a cloud-based app to support the mission's fleet of electronic bicycles.

The bikes are hugely popular with the staff, who use them daily to get to and from meetings at nearby U.N. offices. The app, hosted by the Bureau of European Affairs' Microsoft Azure cloud service, lets employees check out bikes with just a few taps on an iPad. It also provides status updates on the bikes, posted in real time to the post's SharePoint site, that show how many bikes are available.

Humanitarian Affairs officer Mika Cleverley said the app is a time-saver, letting him know if a bike is available at any time. That, he said, "helps me decide when to leave for my meetings or if I need to request a car from Motor Pool, which takes longer." Of those choices, he prefers the bikes.

The app also offers metrics on how many eBikes are used daily or weekly, and how often they are all checked out. This assists the Motor Pool in monitoring the bike program's effectiveness and provides metrics for use in fleet management. ■



At left, Consular Officer Michael Hayes speaks about the relationship between Mahatma Gandhi and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. with, from right, Chargé d’Affaires, MaryKay Carlson and Consul General George Hogeman. They were at an art exhibition held by the embassy to honor Black History Month.

Photo by Embassy New Delhi

Embassy Celebrates Black History Month

In honor of Black History Month, the U.S. Embassy in New Delhi in February explored the relationship between Indians and African-Americans, as each group pursued civil liberties for their communities.

The mission’s art exhibition honoring the contributions of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. focused on the connection between the U.S. civil rights movement and India’s struggle for independence. Images included two life-size portraits of Mahatma Gandhi and Dr. King that featured quotations in Hindi and English, speaking about accomplishing change through nonviolence. For weeks, more than 1,000 visa applicants viewed the exhibit each day. One applicant spoke of appreciating “the way you preserved India-American relationships ... particularly regarding equality and nonviolence.”

The American Center also hosted two panel discussions led by Foreign Service officers Alaina Brown, Frederick Hawkins, Michael Hayes and Nicole Moorehead. They spoke to university students about how Indian statesman Ram Manohar Lohia marched against Jim Crow laws in Mississippi, and noted that African-American activists, including James Lawson and Bayard Rustin, studied nonviolent strategies in India. On the panel on minority inclusion within the political and economic system, officers answered questions from young professionals about their personal experiences overseas and about minority rights in America.

Chargé d’Affaires MaryKay Carlson launched Mission India’s Inaugural Diversity Forum, to promote workplace inclusion, by emphasizing the importance of diversity within the Department and the value of Department-funded fellowships. She noted the value of “utilizing our diversity to contribute to the vitality and success of the global mission.”

Throughout the month, the Public Affairs team amplified embassy events and the achievements of African-Americans on Facebook and Twitter, reaching or engaging with more than 350,000 people on both platforms. ■



German film director Frank Amann thanks Embassy Berlin for its support. He spoke during a panel discussion with the American photographers Sonia Soberats and Bruce Hall, who are blind, after the German premiere of the documentary "Shot in the Dark" in January.

Photo by Juergen Keiper

Photographers Promote Disability Rights

In an effort to dispel the myth that physical disability has to limit people's opportunities, the Public Affairs section at the U.S. Embassy in Berlin sponsored two renowned American photographers, Sonia Soberats and Bruce Hall, in January for an 11-day public diplomacy program that included film screenings, exhibitions, media interviews, workshops and discussions in three German cities. Soberats and Hall, who are blind, spoke of America's progress on disability rights and the U.S. commitment to human rights, equality and opportunity for all. More than 1,200 attended their programs.

Their program featured the premiere of the documentary "Shot in the Dark," which depicts Soberats, Hall and photographer Pete Eckert, who is also blind. The German-made film shares the techniques of these artists, who've exhibited at top galleries and been profiled in The New York Times and other outlets. Soberats was a single immigrant mother in Queens, New York, in the 1990s when she lost her sight while simultaneously enduring the deaths of her son and daughter from cancer. With no experience, she took up photography. Still active at 82, Soberats photographs friends, family and life-changing events, such as pregnancies, marriages and deaths. Hall, also a teacher and disability advocate, can only see in focus items that are within three inches of his eyes. His photos' subjects are often his twin sons, who are autistic.

Held in Kreuzberg, the screening spanned two separate auditoriums, filled to capacity crowds. Attendees included Berliners with vision disabilities, government officials, film lovers, intellectuals and activists. A concert in a darkened concert hall in Berlin with blind and sighted musicians complemented the program.

The artists spoke at the film's screenings in Cologne and Hamburg, leading to panel discussions and conducting photography workshops for all participants. ■

Direct from the D.G.

ARNOLD CHACON
DIRECTOR GENERAL OF THE FOREIGN SERVICE



Moving Ahead on HR Reforms: We can and must deliver for you

Multitasking has fallen out of favor among neuroscientists. Research shows we're more prone to err when we try to do too many things at the same time. But what's true for individuals is not necessarily true for organizations.

The Department must do more than two things at once. The world doesn't stop; and its major challenges are seldom singular occurrences. As the Department works on its proposed budget, gears up to present reorganization proposals, and continues to address global challenges, we are also pressing forward with other major initiatives. For HR, that means completing the reform agenda we began two years ago. Indeed, reforms to modernize, rationalize and streamline our processes have greater urgency as we seek increased operational and organizational efficiency and effectiveness. Beyond performance management, bidding and assignments and Civil Service reform, three areas where we've made important progress are in revamping professional development, modernizing bidding and reference tools (FSBid and 360s) and incentivizing and rewarding performance.

Professional development is about working with and for employees to build experience, knowledge and skills while strengthening both individual and organizational leadership and adaptive capacity. Two important lines of effort on our reform agenda seek to do just that. They are:

- **Office Management Specialist (OMS) Reform:** In early April, I announced that for the first time, promotion opportunities to the FP-02 level will be available for OMSs. Surveys, on-site assessments and interviews with OMSs and supervisors revealed the OMS profession has evolved significantly. Redefining the work, upgrading positions and extending its promotion potential make sense. We also created a Professional Development Plan (PDP) to replace the current OMS Career Development Plan (CDP); the new OMS PDP outlines the requirements to compete for FP-02 promotions. It also better reflects the needs of the Service and aims to ensure that members of the OMS corps have the skills to serve in higher level and more complex roles throughout their careers.
- **FS Professional Development Plan (PDP):** Separately, we are negotiating with AFSA on a PDP to replace the 10-year-old CDP for FS Generalists. As the OMS PDP does for our OMS corps, the effort for FS Generalists will help develop necessary skills while meeting Service needs. Based largely on input from the field, the redesigned, streamlined Generalists' PDP would eliminate "majors" and "minors," as well as most electives, and has a more suitable language requirement. To ensure prospective Senior FS employees have leadership and management skills, the PDP proposes to make supervisory experience a requirement. Operational effectiveness remains a critical component of the PDP. Also proposed to be included are regional and functional expertise, leadership and management skills, foreign language proficiency and service at differential, priority staffing, difficult-to-fill or critical needs posts. Thus, employees will have multiple paths to build meaningful careers and to prepare for executive level responsibilities.

Technology can be a great help or a hindrance -we want to make sure it's the former. That's why we've invested in streamlining 360s and modernizing FSBid.

- **360 to References Reform:** We've been working towards a new reference system to replace the multiple 360 platforms to bring more uniformity and consistency to the FS selection process. We've spoken with regional and functional bureaus and had a preliminary conversation with AFSA. While we hope to be able launch the system in time for the DCM/PO cycle and the summer 2018 bid season, we still have work to do with partners and technology. Our approach, developed with industrial psychologists and reviewing HR best practices in other organizations, is designed to elicit from references clear, concise, and useful information for hiring managers. By using a single platform, we would eliminate duplication: employees would request references just once, references would respond to only one set of questions, with responses routed only to bureaus that control the bid positions; only those bureaus would have access to the responses and all of them would have exactly the same information.

- **TalentMap** will succeed FSBid as the Department's bidding software application. This multi-year IT project will modernize FSBid to provide more reliable real-time information, greater functionality and a better user experience. The application's development phases are already underway.

Finally, we have completely reformed the Civil Service Quality Step Increase (QSI) process to better align exceptional performance with permanent salary increases. This reform will make the CS appraisal process more relevant and meaningful by incorporating the appraisals into the QSI review panels. Stay tuned for the results. ■

Arnold A. Chacon

Conflict Matters

BY SHIREEN DODSON, DIRECTOR,
OFFICE OF THE OMBUDSMAN



An Invitation...

In his welcome remarks to employees, Secretary of State Rex Tillerson asked that each employee adopt three core principles: accountability, honesty and respect. The Office of the Ombudsman (S/O) is a statutorily created office that advises the secretary and senior Department management on workplace issues that prevent or distract employees from fully achieving the Department's mandated responsibilities. Thus, S/O is uniquely positioned to assist with the implementation of these core principles.

Avoiding, rather than addressing, conflicts leads to delayed decision-making, drops in productivity and increased turnover. It also fosters anger and hostility in the workplace. Managers devote between 25 percent and 40 percent of their time dealing with workplace conflicts, by one estimate. S/O's dispute resolution professionals provide resources, training and assistance to employees and managers to foster accountability directly and constructively. By developing competent conflict management skills at all levels, S/O assists employees in refocusing time, energy and resources toward accomplishing the Department's mission.

Honest feedback is the most cost-effective performance management tool available for those giving and receiving feedback. Positive recognition and constructive criticism cost nothing but can reform poor performers, increase morale, motivate a team, drive innovation and drastically improve the quality of services and products. However, providing honest and constructive feedback is challenging—57 percent of the interpersonal conflicts addressed by S/O stem from an evaluative relationship. S/O can offer confidential conflict coaching and anonymous surveys of an office's conflict climate, and these tools assist, employees in delivering and receiving effective honest feedback.

S/O is proud of its role in the Department's efforts to promote a respectful workplace. As Secretary Tillerson said in his remarks, "Before we are employees of the Department of State, we are human beings first." S/O has been at the forefront of the drive to eliminate incivility, gossip and bullying within the Department through outreach with our partner resource offices, trend reporting and customized trainings. Through this time of transition, S/O remains committed to supporting and promoting a respectful workplace. It can feel overwhelming to try to understand the multitude of formal and informal Department resources that are available to address incivility, bullying or harassment in the workplace. Any employee, therefore, can schedule a confidential appointment at S/O with an experienced ombudsman, who can discuss the available options.

All S/O services are provided in an independent, neutral, confidential and informal manner, allowing employees, managers and leaders to voluntarily address workplace conflicts fairly and quickly at the lowest possible level. My staff and I welcome the opportunity to speak with you further about our services and resources. We can be reached by telephone at 202-736-7144 or by email at ombudsman@state.gov. ■

INL Office of Anti-Crime Programs

Office fights transnational crime

By Janelle Kuroda, foreign affairs officer, INL/C Photos by Ed Warner

The White House has made it clear that combating transnational crime is a key national security priority. The Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs Office of Anti-Crime Programs (INL/C) is delivering targeted programs and initiatives that enable police, prosecutors and other officials to hit crime where it lives—before its harmful impact reaches U.S. shores. “Transnational criminal organizations of all stripes are behaving increasingly like multinational corporations, diversifying portfolios into new markets and new industries,” said Assistant Secretary William R. Brownfield. “INL/C is at the forefront of U.S. efforts with partners across the globe to deal with these bad actors—

money launderers, cyber fugitives, corrupt officials, human traffickers and wildlife traffickers.”

A February 2017 Executive Order prioritizes combating transnational criminal organizations and sets out how the U.S. government will organize to counter this threat. INL/C, which advances U.S. foreign policy interests in attacking transnational crime by supporting capacity building, influencing international policy frameworks and fostering international cooperation, will coordinate the Department’s efforts. Under the direction of Office Director Susan Snyder and Deputy Director Rob Leventhal, each of the office’s four teams plays a key role.

Experts on the Crime Team, led by Leo Gallagher,

focus on facilitative crimes such as money laundering and migrant smuggling—and vulnerabilities through cutting-edge programs and international frameworks. The team coordinates the Transnational Organized Crime Rewards Program, which offers rewards for information leading to the arrest or conviction of members of transnational criminal organizations. They also strengthen international anti-money

| *Cont.* | ▼

| 1 of 3 |



The staff of the INL/C office poses for its group.

laundering standards, pushing countries in the direction of reform and enforcement; fight cyber and intellectual property rights crime through regional advisors and legislative assistance programs; and work with international partners to secure borders and stem migrant smuggling that can feed humanitarian crises and bankroll crime lords.

The Anticorruption Team, led by Marianne Toussaint, empowers governments and civil society to fight graft that fuels transnational crime and undermines stability. The political commitments they have developed within key international groups such as the G20, and legally binding norms within treaties such as the U.N. Convention against Corruption, are changing the rules of the game. Their programs engage grassroots reformers, but also strike at high-level “kleptocrats,” as the team works to strengthen global networks to help countries recover their stolen assets, sometimes measured in hundreds of millions of dollars. They also manage a program that denies corrupt foreign officials access to the United States, preventing them from enjoying ill-gotten gains here. Recent assistance successes include helping a partner country establish a new anti-corruption agency and pass a whistleblower protection law.

Under the leadership of Lisa Spratt, the Wildlife Trafficking and Environmental Crime Team arms rangers, police and other officials to stem the tragic slaughter and trafficking of iconic species in Africa, Asia and around the world. INL/C-funded capacity building programs provide our law enforcement collaborators with newfound skills to interdict illegal wildlife products, investigate and prosecute environmental crime and mount regional operations aimed at disrupting key trafficking groups. Recent landmarks include the mentoring of special investigative teams resulting in high-level arrests in Central Africa, and a large seizure of ivory and pangolin scales by Cambodian customs officials following INL-funded training.



Foreign Affairs Officer Fort Felker and Wildlife Program Officer Damaris Thompson share a light moment after a meeting.



Deputy Director Rob Leventhal discusses a matter with Anticorruption Advisor David Grier.



INL/C Director Susan Snyder leads an interagency delegation to the G20 Anti-Corruption Working Group, promoting U.S. priorities at meeting in Berlin.
Department of State Photo

The International Law Enforcement Academies (ILEA) Team, led by John Koogler, oversees the operations of training academies in Bangkok, Budapest, Gaborone, San Salvador and Roswell, New Mexico, as well as a Regional Training Center in Accra. The ILEA program collaborates with 16 U.S. federal and local law enforcement agencies to train approximately 4,500 officials from more than 85 countries annually on transnational organized crime, anti-corruption, counter-narcotics, trafficking in persons and other cutting-edge law enforcement issues. The ILEAs foster partnerships among participants and with U.S. law enforcement. Alumni regularly report using their training to seize illicit goods and drugs, including those destined for the United States, and to bring charges for crimes linked to U.S. victims.

For more information about INL, please visit the [INL website](#). ■



Foreign Affairs Officer Valerie Silensky greets a visitor to her cubicle.



Ed Knowlin, administrative assistant to the office director, looks up from his work.



Enabling Self-Defense

FACT course adapts for employees with disabilities

By Hannah Patterson, coordinator, Foreign Affairs Counter Threat course, FSI

According to 2010 data, people with disabilities are twice as likely to be assaulted as those without.

But employees with disabilities should keep in mind that FSI's Foreign Affairs Counter Threat (FACT) course provides self-defense training to all Department employees who're being sent overseas and need the training—including those with a disability. This requires the FACT team to consider the unique needs of hearing, visually and mobility impaired course participants and to work with the Department's Disabilities and Reasonable Accommodations Division (DRAD) to accommodate those needs.

The five-day course, taught by the Bureau of Diplomatic Security at the DS Interim Training Facility (ITF), combines lectures and hands-on skills that heighten participants' security awareness and increase their personal security abilities. Roughly half the course is spent practicing skills in cars, on medical mannequins or by maneuvering outside.

One course segment is self-defense training. "The Self-Defense for Overseas Travel (SDOT) module is the only self-defense training in the State Department that has developed curriculum to meet the needs of the hearing, visually and mobility impaired staff," said Unit Chief Matt Watson. He added that DRAD believes the Department is "one of the first federal agencies to offer self-defense training for this often-overlooked demographic."

Each week, the self-defense instructors spend time in a room filled with wrestling mats, where FACT participants learn kicks, strikes and de-escalation techniques. The course's alternative curriculum for employees with disabilities involves adjustments to this. When FACT's curriculum was being developed, instructors worked with mobility or visually

Opening Video: Lead SDOT instructor Matt Watson works with a student to perfect the palm-heel-strike technique.

Video by Lonnie Harrell

impaired volunteers and gained feedback about which techniques the volunteers felt comfortable with and which they could not do. Thus, the course was modified to teach strikes, ground work and how to manipulate an attacker's joints in ways that build on the participant's strengths, even if the participant has differing abilities.

DRAD's Scott Duncan took FACT training in August of 2015. "When traveling for State, the circumstances for a person with a disability might be very different than for a nondisabled person in the event of a personal attack," he observed. Duncan said that, because he's an individual who is legally blind, "responding to an attack with force in order to flee the situation may not be the wisest course of action."

During training, Duncan asked his instructors for techniques that would let him disable his attacker, so he could gain enough time to flee without having to run at top speed. The self-defense instructors, he said, worked with him "to hone close contact and ground-fighting tactics that would maximize my ability to subdue an attacker and thus allow me avoid harm." The instructors also donned head-to-toe padding, to let Duncan to practice self-defense techniques in a simulated attack.

To address the needs of a participant who is visually impaired, course instructors take advantage of such participants' heightened sense of touch, teaching them to maintain contact as a reference point to work from, explained self-defense instructor John Cooper. "If contact is broken, we teach the participant to go off of hearing, to pick out the position of my head by following the sound of my voice," he said, adding, "I've been mid-sentence [when] explaining this when I received a good thump or two." | *Cont.* | ▼



SDOT instructor John Cooper teaches a FACT student wrist-control techniques.
Photo by Lonnie Harrell

The instructors also teach the proper stance to brace, to make it less likely they'll lose their balance while striking back. They also teach ground-fighting techniques that let the victim get off the ground quickly and into a defensive posture. "The trainers reminded me that people often underestimate the abilities of people who have disabilities," Duncan recalled. He said "a good offense could be key in an altercation," and that the course's alternate curriculum gave him a sense of greater power in a crisis. He now feels much safer when traveling, he added.

For mobility impaired employees taking the course, instructors focus on teaching wrist-control and joint-manipulation techniques. "Borrowing pulling techniques from Aikido and other martial arts allows us to focus on specific body movements that require less strength to get to the same end goal," said instructor Elyssa Guz-Montgomery. Participants with mobility impairment, she explained, are taught that, if grabbed by an assailant, they can quickly twist their hand to get out of a wrist grab. Participants in wheelchairs are taught to strike while locking the wheel of a wheelchair, which maximizes the strike's force and minimizes movement. Should the victim of an attack be knocked out or fall from a wheelchair, he or she can respond with "groundwork techniques," which let the victim quickly move back to his or her wheelchair.

"Just as with any other self-defense situation that cannot be de-escalated, adapting with improvised weapons to disable an attacker long enough to get away is key," instructor Dan Merritt observed.

Each year, the FACT program hosts 4,800–6,200 participants, and by 2019, all personnel under chief of mission authority will have to attend FACT. Personnel with disabilities need not worry, though, as the course and the trainers' close relationship with DRAD will provide the training they need to stay safe, as it does for all course participants. ■

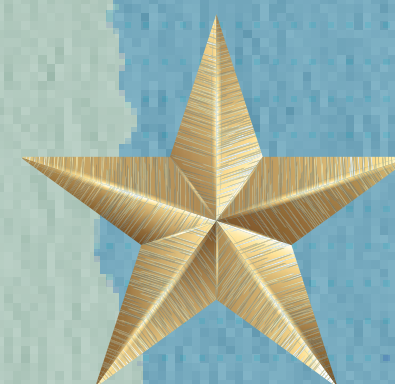
On the Map

CA contest promotes team cohesion

By Heather Jordan, deputy director; and Carl Hicks, management analyst, Office of 1CA

The Bureau of Consular Affairs (CA) established the 1CA office to transform the way the bureau conducts business, aiming for a situation where all consular professionals are on the same team, together carrying out the CA mission, using shared resources effectively and efficiently. To this end, 1CA launched the annual Put Yourself on the Map contest to showcase how consular teams transform their operations with innovative leadership and management solutions.

This year, the contest received more than 70 submissions. CA staff worldwide then voted on the stories, choosing the Monterrey consular team's entry as the Field Favorite, or top winner. First Runner-Up honors went to the Shenyang consular team, and the Montevideo consular team took the Second Runner-Up spot.



Monterrey, Mexico (Vision: Todo al Asador)

For the contest, Monterrey's consular section chronicled its journey from a culture of process to a culture of excellence. The team included all 102 people in the section, who participated in a series of activities, including brainstorming, Shark Tank-style meetings and speed networking. They aimed to define success across all section operations and establish the section's service standards. The team said that, by defining success "and measuring our performance against that definition, we will be able to identify our strengths and weaknesses and pinpoint areas where additional resources or training could lead to significant gains in efficiency." The section expects its Service Standards Model will help institutionalize a process of continual re-evaluation of its goals and processes. The section also empowers its Locally Employed staff and maximizes collaboration with FSOs, to "foster innovation and creativity at all levels."

Ultimately, it hopes the model will lead to quantitative efficiency improvements and qualitative improvements in teamwork and morale. It said the organizational culture won't "change overnight—but the outcomes are well worth the investment."

Its vision statement, Todo al Asador (literally, "everyone to the grill"), means all must put forth maximum effort to achieve a task or goal. Fraud Prevention Manager Matthew Wright said the campaign "energized and transformed our section in a way I've rarely seen, and really given us a collective sense of direction." | *Cont.* | ▼



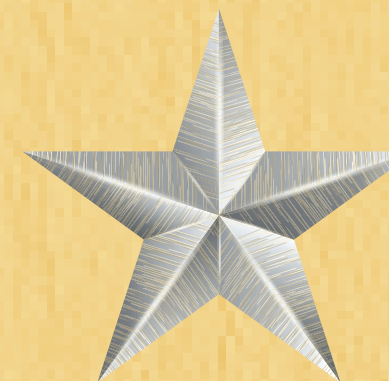
Posed at Consulate Monterrey are members of the ICA Team with consular managers and supervisors. They include, at rear from left, Maru Del Bosque, Ruben De Lucio, Miguel Rivera, Matthew Wright, Enrique Fuentes, Benjamin Brown and Mariela Arrasco. In the middle row from left are Lisa Mooty, John T. Has-Ellison, Scott Cecil, Nadia Macias, Jaime Patricio Varela, Ivonne Gonzalez and Denise Taylor. At front from left are Marina Amarillas, Karla Leos, Sandra Lozano, Enedino Bazaldua, Shannon Brown and Patricia Rodriguez.

Photo by Tiffany Anderson Photography



The Consulate Shenyang ICA Social Media Team includes, standing from left, Jiang Yuebing, Li Danqing, Hu Yuan and Tan Xilin. Sitting from left are Leland Lazarus, Christopher Rose and Thanh Kim.

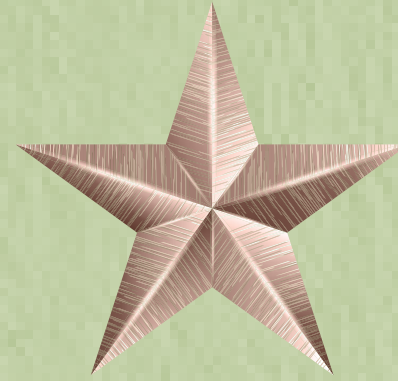
Photo by Yingqiang Zhang



Shenyang, China (Vision: Gotta Have Faith)

When conducting social media outreach in a part of China known for heavy restrictions on social media, the consular section had to be creative, collaborative and organized. So, the section used song titles of the late George Michael to help describe how it redesigned its website to increase region-specific content. The site now also has additional posts on American culture and travel, provides monthly live audio chats and aggressively markets its social media presence. As a result, there's been an increase in preparedness among applicants, cutting down their refusal rate for 221g visas. When photo requirements for visa applicants changed in November, the post disseminated that message to applicants throughout the consular district, so that most applicants came prepared for their appointments.

The team also started to see success in breaking down common myths held by applicants and in protecting applicants from misinformation. Over a four-month period, views of Shenyang's Weibo account jumped from 150 per day to more than 2,700, an 1800 percent increase. Having LE staffer Li Danqing lead the initiative was essential to its success, the team said, as Danqing helped surmount the challenges of social media in China. Public Affairs Officer Thanh Kim said the team's "LE staff knows the local conditions best. If you don't seek their knowledge, you won't be as effective." Danqing spoke of being "surprised and happy that our success story was popular." | *Cont.* | ▼



Montevideo, Uruguay (Vision: The Little Engine That Did)

Montevideo's success shows that a small section can make a big impact. The 10-member team dramatically reduced average customer wait times and boosted staff productivity by using the CA management toolkit to streamline service intake, data entry and the flow of case-processing. The toolkit also helped it redesign its customer waiting room and create a step-by-step instructional video that visa applicants receive prior to their appointments. (It also runs on waiting room monitors.) The average American Citizens Services case there now takes a mere 35 minutes from start to finish, and the average nonimmigrant visa customer is in and out of the consulate in just 19 minutes. This leaves the consulate staff with more time for new initiatives, cross training and professional development. Customers, too, applaud their enhanced experience, even when they don't get the answer they want. As Ambassador Kelly Keiderling put it, "Our consular section is not only the little engine that could, but that did."



Taking interviews at the consular window in Montevideo are, from left, Malena Algorta, Nathalie Serqueda, Kip Whittington, Ryan Crowley and Ana Peluffo.

Photo by Embassy Montevideo

The global CA team regularly faces and overcomes such challenges as fluctuations in demand, changes in policies and a need to meet increased public expectations. Thus, CA must be agile, innovative and continuously improving. The 1CA management framework and toolkit, both based on industry best practices, encourage consular managers to establish a balanced operating strategy, develop actionable plans to implement it and call on teams to continuously reduce waste and improve their work.

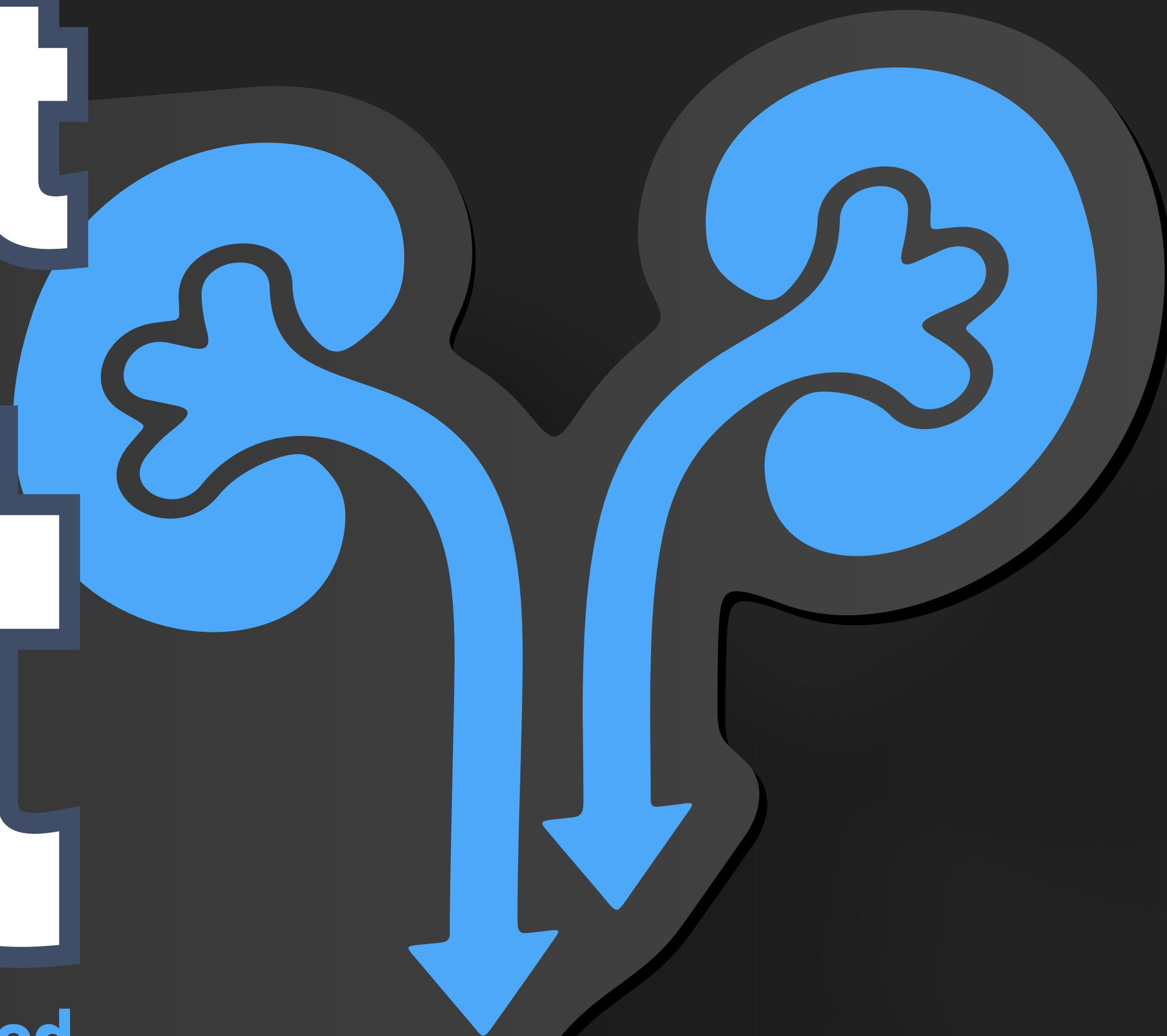
The map referred to by the Put Yourself on the Map contest is a success story map that reflects the more than 850 stories submitted to 1CA since 2013. The contest adds more successes to the map, increases engagement from the field and reflects a CA aim of adding elements of game

design and competition into its activities, to make the task fun and engaging.

Among the 70-plus stories submitted during the latest contest were those telling of how teams used the 1CA toolkit for such problems as fortifying the procedures to vet applicants for membership in transnational gangs in Guatemala, or to use consular functions to improve the bilateral relationship in Ukraine. Another story told of a consular section's role in the missing persons/imposter fraud case detailed in the documentary "The Imposter."

Because the contest's voting for the best stories was done bureauwide, the stories were shared globally. And because they were shared, others could learn from them, which is just what the bureau wants. ■

Greatest Gift



Kidney donor helps a stranger in need

By Bob Kirk, Foreign Service specialist

Why did you donate a kidney? I've often been asked that since Jan. 17, when I donated my kidney to a 35-year-old California mother I never met. For one, there's the desperate need: Every year, 4,500 Americans die waiting for a kidney transplant. For another, as my 86-year-old mother said, on learning I was going to donate a kidney, "We have two kidneys for a reason." Finally, there's the fact that, to encourage donations, the federal government has a generous Organ Donor Leave program.

I served four tours overseas as a Foreign Service specialist between 2003 and 2013. When I was assigned a domestic tour with the Functional Specialization Program, I decided: "This is a good time to donate a kidney."

Living donor transplants have far better recipient outcomes than transplants from deceased donors, which make up two-thirds

of all transplants. The overwhelming majority of live kidney donors donate to someone they know. Some donors start off volunteering to help a friend or family member, but then, after making the momentous decision and going through all the tests, find they are not a match to the intended recipient, so they decide to donate to a stranger.

Only 1–2 percent of living donations are, like mine, destined for a stranger.

Many factors besides blood type affect whether a kidney donation will work with the intended recipient, and many recipients do fine with less-than-perfect matches. Often a close friend or relative is a match, but a better match can be found in the whole pool of donors across the nation. That's when the kidney transplant "chain" comes into use. | *Cont.* | ▼

Kidney donors are matched to unknown recipients through chains of donors in which algorithms work to find the best match for each recipient. The chains allow willing donors to give kidneys to anyone who's a good match, even a stranger who lives hundreds of miles away. The National Kidney Registry's donor database links up hospitals' and transplant centers' pairs of patients and donors, then shuffle around the available kidneys so that all recipients end up with the organ that's the best match possible, regardless of their relationship with the donor.

But someone has to start the chain by agreeing to give a kidney to a stranger.

While deciding whether to donate, I spoke with an FSO who served with me in Doha, Guy Strandemo. Strandemo gave his kidney to his 6-year-old daughter in 2006 but it looked like she might soon need another kidney. I turned out not to be a match, so I decided to become an altruistic donor. Donating a kidney is something I could do to benefit others in need. I've since learned that researchers at Georgetown University who studied the brain waves of altruistic kidney donors found their subjects were better able to show empathy for those in distress. One of the researchers also did a 2016 TED Talk where she noted that "100 years ago people would have thought it was ludicrous how normal and ordinary it is for people to donate their blood and bone marrow to complete strangers today."

Maybe altruistic kidney donors are simply a little ahead of their time.

To make the donation, I first had to go from clinic to clinic, experiencing the painstaking medical clearance process at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center. There, I asked staff members if they'd donated a kidney—none had. Not surprising: Most people have an aversion to pain and many also distrust surgery.

Not donating leaves a possible recipient to suffer kidney failure and dialysis, in which a machine mimics the kidneys' function by removing wastes from the blood. Dialysis is unpleasant, must be done at least weekly and may keep the patient alive only for five to 10 years. That sounds miserable.

Kidney donation isn't as risky as you'd think. In fact, the lifespan



of kidney donors is actually longer than that of the general population, since the disproportionately healthy can be cleared to be donors. Being middle aged with a stellar medical history, I spent many hours of visits to Walter Reed from August through November before I was medically cleared.

There is a tiny risk, however. While just 0.03 percent of people who donate a kidney die from the donation, donors must afterward be careful with their remaining kidney, maintaining a healthy lifestyle and protecting themselves from injuries. Most people lead perfectly healthy lives with one kidney and, if their one kidney does fail, the donor who gave to a stranger goes to the top of the national waiting list for a kidney.

| *Cont.* | ▼

| 2 of 3 |

Financial concerns are also minimal, as the recipient's medical insurance or Medicare typically cover any donor medical expenses relating to the donation. Donors do have to consider the cost of recovery time away from work and that insurance may not cover post-op complications. So far, I have had no expenses aside from time and transport to Walter Reed, not even prescription drug or doctor visit copays.

Most donors use up their sick and vacation leave after surgery. Not me. Federal employees do not have to use our annual leave or sick leave to cover organ donation. The 1999 Organ Donor Leave Act allows up to 30 work days off for organ donation; I even used my Organ Donor Leave to write this article while I convalesced at home.

Other kidney donors also seem to have had smooth recoveries. Most of the donors whose accounts I'd read spoke of post-op pain, discomfort and downtime, but all then went back to work. One even ran an ultra-marathon within a year. None had serious medical complications. Many later met the recipients of their kidneys. I hope to meet or at least contact mine sometime.

Other donors, when asked why they'd donated, typically responded as I would: "Why wouldn't I? I don't need it and someone does." For me, the decision wasn't the hard part; it was the timing and logistics. In November, when I was approved to donate, I gave Walter Reed Hospital the dates I preferred. During the Christmas holiday, I was given a month's notice to confirm the date.

On the day of the surgery I was excited and nervous, but it all went fine. My hospital highlight was being visited by three therapy dogs while still in the Intensive Care Unit. I stayed in the hospital for four nights and then was sent home, warned not to lift anything over 10 pounds for six weeks. I have since returned to bicycle commuting on my 8.5-mile route to Foggy Bottom, despite the snow and ice, and don't have any lingering pain.

Information about becoming a living kidney donor is available online, or from the National Kidney Foundation. ■

Kidney donor Bob Kirk, headed to a post as deputy financial management officer at the U.S. Embassy in London, poses in the office where he served his D.C. rotation, that of International Cooperative Administrative Support Services (ICASS).

Photo by Ed Warner



Peace Makers

CSO team aids Department's negotiators

By Rachel Schiller, peace process support advisor, Office of Analysis, Planning, Programming, and Learning, Bureau of Conflict and Stabilization Operations

The Bureau of Conflict and Stabilization Operations (CSO) Peace Process Support (PPS) team uses its years of experience in peace negotiations to help U.S. diplomats achieve sustainable peace agreements, providing them with analytical, technical and program support. The negotiators need it: 42 percent of peace agreements fail within the first five years of implementation.

CSO provides support and qualitative analysis for use in formal and informal negotiations, helping to analyze negotiations, design mediations and identify sources of leverage and strategies. Its services cover all stages of negotiation, including before the parties come to the table, while they are at the table and throughout the implementation. PPS prepares the parties for negotiating with capacity building workshops and offers technical | *Cont.* | ▼



Violent conflict in Sana'a and across Yemen has displaced more than 3 million people.

Photo by Christiaan James



Peace in Yemen will permit a return to normal commercial activities, reduce food insecurity and allow a better future.

Photo by Christiaan James

advice on ceasefires, transitional security arrangements and ethnic and political power-sharing arrangements during negotiations. After agreements are reached, it can troubleshoot implementation obstacles.

CSO's "map and gap" approach combines quantitative and qualitative analysis. Using forecasting and data visualization it "maps" the conflict and then finds and helps fill gaps in the policy and program responses. CSO's regional knowledge, peace process experience and analytical capabilities let it conduct computerized negotiation simulations and negotiation modeling. The bureau also can simulate how negotiations are likely to evolve, assess the flexibility of key actors and identify win-win outcomes.

CSO has used these methods in the Israel-Palestine, Syria Geneva II and Colombian transitional justice negotiations, helping with successful resolutions on some of the most challenging and important issues in foreign policy.

The PPS team began in 2014 by asking U.S. diplomats about the challenges they face in gaining sustainable agreements and what support would be useful. "We heard real demand for this type of service across the [Harry S Truman] building," said CSO Acting Assistant Secretary Tom Hushek. From desk officers to special envoys, all asked for increased technical capacity to leverage negotiations' lessons learned and best practices.

"We also heard loud and clear that diplomats wanted support, not a team to come in and take over their negotiation or mediation efforts," Hushek continued. He said PPS responded by designing its work "as service providers and thinking of regional bureaus, embassies and special envoys as our clients."

"We know that flexibility is critical to achieving our mission, and we work closely with senior leaders in the Department to strike the right balance," explained former CSO Assistant Secretary David Robinson, who was the principal deputy high representative in Bosnia and Herzegovina from 2014–2015 and assistant chief of mission at the U.S. Embassy in Kabul from 2013–2014.

In Bosnia, he said he saw the challenges of implementing a peace agreement. "Twenty years after the end of the war, Bosnia is still grappling with challenges of balancing democracy and governance," Robinson continued. Turning to his experience with the Serbians failing to take responsibility for the Srebrenica genocide, he said that, without a reconciliation mechanism, there can be no sustainable



Colombian children now have the chance to grow up without conflict between the government of Colombia and the FARC.
Photo by U.S. Embassy Colombia



President Santos and FARC Commander in Chief "Timochenko" Rodrigo Londoño Echeverri mark the end of 50 years of conflict in Colombia with a peace accord.
Photo by US Embassy Colombia

peace. He said CSO's peace process support helps "diplomats draw on lessons learned from past experience and cutting edge research to achieve U.S. goals of resolving or preventing conflict."

In early 2016, CSO created the Peace Process Support Network (PPSN), a group of 37 NGOs and academic institutions that are leaders in peace process support. CSO sought "to capture the wealth of knowledge that exists outside the U.S. government on best practices in negotiation and mediation support," said Jason Ladnier, who helped launch the PPSN. Ladnier, acting deputy assistant secretary at CSO, said partnerships "are critical components of our diplomatic efforts to achieve peace. Integrating the full spectrum of actors and capabilities into a peace process is essential to achieving sustainable agreements." (A list of CSO partners is on [CSO's website](#).) At the launch of PPSN in November, then Under Secretary for Political Affairs Thomas Shannon called for the Department to use PPSN to enhance U.S. support for peace.

In 2016, CSO designed and funded more than \$10 million in peace support programs in six countries. One partner funded, the Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies at the University of Notre Dame, monitors implementation of the peace accord in Colombia. Drawing on its database of 34 peace agreements, the institute is providing the U.S. Embassy in Bogota and the government of Colombia with real-time monitoring of the accord's implementation and advice to other countries with peace process obstacles.

The PPSN partner in Yemen, meanwhile, helps CSO support international efforts to end hostilities, increase ceasefire-preservation mechanisms, enhance the viability of peace negotiation and mitigate the risk from those trying to delay or derail the peace process. CSO also funds security sector experts to advise the UN Special Envoy to Yemen, the U.S. Yemen Affairs Unit and the Department's international partners on ceasefire design and transitional security planning.

Matthew Tueller, U.S. Ambassador to Yemen since 2014, said, "CSO has provided timely, expert help to the Yemen Affairs Unit, which we have been able to use to advance detailed ceasefire proposals and develop Track II initiatives to support the efforts of the U.N. Special Envoy to Yemen." He lauded CSO staff expertise, especially as an asset to an embassy's political or political-military section, and said CSO's aid "enhanced our ability to stay relevant in efforts to bring about an end to the conflict in Yemen."

Other PPSN partners, such as the Inclusive Peace and Transition Initiative at the Graduate Institute Geneva, can help with designing agreements and post-accord implementation. Similarly, groups such as the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue, the Public International Law and Policy Group and the Carter Center, can implement programs that build parties' negotiation capacity, prepare for constructive negotiations, provide technical guidance on power sharing or other political dimensions of negotiation, and support international mediators.

Contact the PPS team via [email](#) for additional information. ■

MISSION GHANA

Deepening the relationship with a longtime friend

By Sara Veldhuizen Stealy, information officer,
U.S. Embassy in Accra, Ghana

When Ghana's Electoral Commission in December announced the results of the presidential election held two days earlier, the transition went smoothly: The winner, who had defeated the incumbent, gave a victory speech and the loser next emerged from his residence to offer his concession. And with that, Ghana reinforced its credentials as one of the leading democracies on the African continent, boasting seven consecutive free and fair elections and multiple interparty transfers of power. It also has a respectable human rights record, an apolitical military and a vibrant, free media environment.

"Our main focus in 2016 was supporting free, fair, peaceful and credible elections in Ghana," said Ambassador Robert P. Jackson. He said the embassy was confident in the Electoral Commission and "knew the majority of Ghanaians wanted peaceful, credible elections."

He added that Ghanaians "weren't worried—they knew Ghana would prove itself worthy of its reputation. They were right."

The U.S. government supported the Ghanaian elections with more than \$7 million in funding to improve the transparency and credibility of the Electoral Commission; to enable civil society groups to conduct a parallel vote tabulation; and to train national and regional peace councils, media, traditional and religious leaders and others on peace messaging. The funding also supported such activities as multimedia campaigns on peaceful elections, empowerment programs for youth and women, and training for journalists.

On election day, 50 teams of Americans and Ghanaians from all U.S. Mission sections and agencies fanned out across the country to observe voting and report their findings to a round-the-clock control room. This whole-of-embassy endeavor reflected the inclusive, interagency nature of Mission Ghana, which works together to deepen the U.S. relationship with this longtime friend. | *Cont.* | ▼

Wli Falls is the highest waterfall in West Africa. Hikers can follow trails to the pool at the bottom of the falls or hike to the top. *Photo by Jennifer A. Yost*

The U.S. relationship dates back 60 years to Ghana's independence, though ties between the countries are deeper and more personal, having arisen in the merciless conditions of the African slave trade. Many African-Americans trace their roots to Ghana and have come back to visit. They include poet Maya Angelou and activist W.E.B. Du Bois, whose grave is just steps from the embassy.

Ghana was the first nation to receive a Peace Corps contingent, in August 1961, and its current complement of approximately 150 Peace Corps volunteers works in agriculture, education and health. Thousands of Ghanaians also have been educated in the United States. The second-largest number of African students in the United States comes from Ghana.

Presently, 13 U.S. agencies work out of the embassy. The United States is also Ghana's largest bilateral donor, collaborating on agriculture, anti-trafficking, defense and even prevention of electrical outages. In 2014, Ghana signed on for its second Millennium Challenge Compact, which aims to strengthen the electrical power sector. Ghana completed its first compact in 2012, a program to raise farm incomes through improved agricultural infrastructure and expanded access to markets.

"Ghana needs electricity to grow," said Millennium Challenge Corporation Country Director Deidra Fair James. Since businesses need power to flourish, she said, "Compact II will invest nearly 500 million dollars in the power sector." Some of the money will bring a private concessionaire "to operate the state-owned Electricity Company of Ghana and return it to efficiency and profitability." That concessionaire will itself need to invest \$500 million over the compact's first five years, making this a \$1 billion project.

U.S. companies with operations in Ghana include Johnson & Johnson, Visa, Pizza Hut, GE and Procter & Gamble, all seeking expanded markets and creating jobs on both sides of the Atlantic. | *Cont.* | ▼



A Ghanaian man walks along the coast outside Elmina Castle, where thousands of slaves had been imprisoned before shipment.

Photo by J. Letizia

From left, Babette Jackson, Ambassador Robert Jackson and USAID/Ghana Mission Director Andy Karas learn the “Wildlife! Wildlife! Wildlife!” chant from rangers protecting Mole National Park.
Photo by Sara Veldhuizen Steady



Ghana's stability makes it an ideal partner for such U.S. government initiatives as Power Africa, Feed the Future, Trade Africa, the Partnership for Growth and the Security Governance Initiative. With an annual budget totaling more than \$145 million, USAID/Ghana promotes development in all 10 of Ghana's regions, especially in the three northern regions whose growth lags that of the urban south. Feed the Future programs improve nutrition and incomes by training farmers in improved production methods and helping mobilize finance for Ghanaian agribusinesses. They also promote cultivation of rice and beans, and the cultivation of nutrient-rich crops, such as soybeans and sweet potatoes. In some villages, women farmers use their newfound incomes to informally provide loans, building their capital via the interest payments. USAID health programs increase the quality and access to health care, while its governance programs strengthen accountability and transparency and education initiatives strive to improve reading proficiency for nearly 3 million Ghanaian primary school students.

Embassy Accra also houses the USAID/West Africa Regional Mission, which addresses such trans-boundary issues as violent extremism, wildlife trafficking, drought control, and regional trade while overseeing projects in countries without an USAID mission. | *Cont.* | ▼



A kente cloth weaver works on his next creation, in which every pattern and color tells a story.

Photo by Jennifer A. Yost

Photo by Kwabena Akuamoah-Boateng



A poll worker prepares a ballot on Ghana's December 2016 Election Day, its seventh consecutive free, fair and peaceful elections.

Photo by Sara Veldhuizen Stealy

|||||

Another aspect of the bilateral relationship involves Ghana's military, a professional and apolitical organization that, in polls, is the public's second most trusted institution. "Our bilateral relationship includes a multitude of security cooperation activities," noted Commander Enid Brackett, chief of the Office of Security Cooperation. She said activities largely focus on supporting Ghana's

| *Cont.* | ▼

Photo by Sara Veldhuizen Stealy

peacekeeping contributions (Ghana is the 10th largest U.N. peacekeeping contributor worldwide) and combating illicit trafficking in the Gulf of Guinea. Ghana also hosts and participates in several U.S.-sponsored exercises and the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Center, a forum for academic collaboration in security and peace studies. Ghana is also in the West Africa Disaster Preparedness Initiative, a U.S.-Africa Command project that strengthens disaster-response capabilities in 15 countries in the region.

The mission's breadth of projects and programs keeps it busy, but staff members have time to also enjoy the nation's culture, history, beauty and its people; Ghanaians are renowned for their friendliness. While Ghana's tourism infrastructure has limitations, those willing to overlook minor inconveniences find it's a lively, rewarding place to serve.

"One of the best parts of my experience in Ghana has been how relatively easy it is to travel within the country," said Paul Mignano, a first-tour vice consul. "We've been to the Sacred Crocodile Ponds of Paga, where you can touch the crocodiles. We've traversed the canopy walk in the rain forest. And we've come to better understand the history of Cape Coast and the traditions of the Asante people. It's been a remarkable experience." | *Cont.* | ▼



Ambassador Jackson, center, visits Dignity/Do The Right Thing Apparel, a Ghanaian-American venture that employs more than 1,600 workers, primarily women, and exports to the United States under the African Growth and Opportunity Act.

Photo by Kwabena Akuamoah-Boateng



Above: No event in Ghana is complete without a lively display of drumming and dancing.
Photo by Sara Veldhuizen Stealy

Right: TK Beads is a popular stop for fans of Ghana's renowned handmade glass beads.
Photo by J. Letizia

Economic Counselor Jimmy Mauldin and Human Resources Associate Jennifer Mauldin have seen many changes in Ghana, having served in NGOs there in the late 1990s and early 2000s. "You can see the impact of a growing middle class here," Jennifer Mauldin said. She noted that the nation has more restaurants, shops and hotels, making Accra a great place to "test the waters of Africa."

"There's a lot going on here, and you can be involved in that and have a very full life," she elaborated. "I've had two children here, I've raised children here; it's definitely an ideal place for young families."

Deputy Political Chief Navarro Moore said his children enjoy the individualized approach to learning at the local Lincoln Community School and its variety of extracurricular activities.

"Personally, meeting the Asantehene, the Ashanti king, was one of the most memorable moments of this tour for my family and me," he continued. Although one of the most powerful and revered people in the country, the king "was very courteous and genuinely interested in learning more about how we were finding our stay in Ghana," he recalled. | *Cont.* | ▼



Jackson expects Ghana will “play a more activist and outsized role on the continent in the coming years, “as the new government was elected on promises of economic reform, increasing transparency and prosecuting corruption. He noted that its new president wants to make Ghana attractive for investment, promote private enterprise and have the nation’s diaspora consider returning home and contributing to Ghana’s growth. “These are goals that benefit Ghanaians and Americans, and [ones] that we look forward to supporting,” he noted. ■



Photo by Kwabena Akuamoah-Boateng

At a Glance

Ghana



Capital:
Accra

Government Type:
presidential republic

Area:
238,533 sq km

note: estimates for this country explicitly take into account the effects of excess mortality due to AIDS; this can result in lower life expectancy, higher infant mortality, higher death rates, lower population growth rates and changes in the distribution of population by age and sex than would otherwise be expected (July 2016 est.)

Population:
26,908,262

Major urban areas:
Kumasi 2.599 million; Accra (capital) 2.277 million (2015)

Ethnic groups:
Akan 47.5%, Mole-Dagbon 16.6%, Ewe 13.9%, Ga-Dangme 7.4%, Gurma 5.7%, Guan 3.7%, Grusi 2.5%, Mande 1.1%, other 1.4% (2010 est.)

[Return](#)

Religions:
Christian 71.2% (Pentecostal/Charismatic 28.3%, Protestant 18.4%, Catholic 13.1%, other 11.4%), Muslim 17.6%, traditional 5.2%, other 0.8%, none 5.2% (2010 est.)

Languages:
Asante 16%, Ewe 14%, Fante 11.6%, Boron (Brong) 4.9%, Dagomba 4.4%, Dangme 4.2%, Dagarte (Dagaba) 3.9%, Kokomba 3.5%, Akyem 3.2%, Ga 3.1%, other 31.2%

note: English is the official language (2010 est.)

Exports (commodities):
oil, gold, cocoa, timber, tuna, bauxite, aluminum, manganese ore, diamonds, horticultural products



Export partners:
India 25.2%, Switzerland 12.2%, China 10.6%, France 5.7% (2015)

Imports:
capital equipment, refined petroleum, foodstuffs

Import partners:
China 32.6%, Nigeria 14%, Netherlands 5.5%, U.S. 5.4% (2015)

Currency:
Ghanaian cedi

Internet country code:
.gh

* The CIA World Factbook

SECOND SECRETARY TODD TODDWELL'S BEST EMPLOYEE EVALUATION EVER! (FIRST DRAFT)



"TODD TODDWELL IS ONE OF SIX OFFICERS IN THE POLITICAL SECTION, BUT NUMBER ONE IN THE HEARTS OF THOSE WHO APPRECIATE GEOSTRATEGIC PERSPECTIVE, COGNITIVE RIGOR AND LUSH, WELL-COIFFED LOCKS IN ONE BEEFCAKEY PACKAGE - HE'S THE GOAT!"



PRETTY SURE YOU CAN'T SAY THAT, TODD!



"TODD CHURNED OUT MEMO AFTER SPLENDIDLY ARTICULATE MEMO WHILE FOCUSING ON HIS CORE VALUE OF WORKING ON HIS CORE."

DON'T THINK YOU CAN SAY THAT EITHER...

CAN'T SAY "SPLENDID..."

TALKING POINTS FOR AMBASSADOR PLUS SIDE PLANK!



"TODD MASTERED THE LOCAL LANGUAGE TO A LEVEL AT WHICH HE WAS ONLY MINIMALLY MOCKED (OPENLY)."

(I AM ALSO IN SUCH THROES.)

ME DANCING MOIST CLAMBAKE, AND YOU?

(I AM IN DEATH THROES OF AMUSEMENT ON THE INSIDE.)



"HE FOSTERED UNDERSTANDING OF U.S. POSITIONS LIKE A BEAST!"

YO, UNDERSTAND?
UNDERSTAND?!?



"DEVELOPMENTAL AREA: TODD SHOULD SEEK NOT TO BLIND HIS PEERS WITH THE SHINING STAR OF HIS UNPARALLELED (AND PROMOTION-WORTHY) AWESOMENESS"



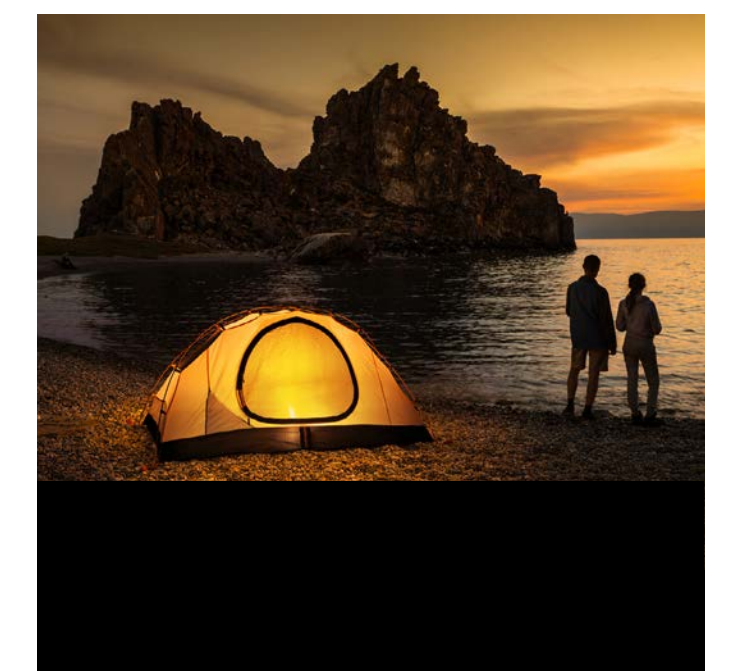
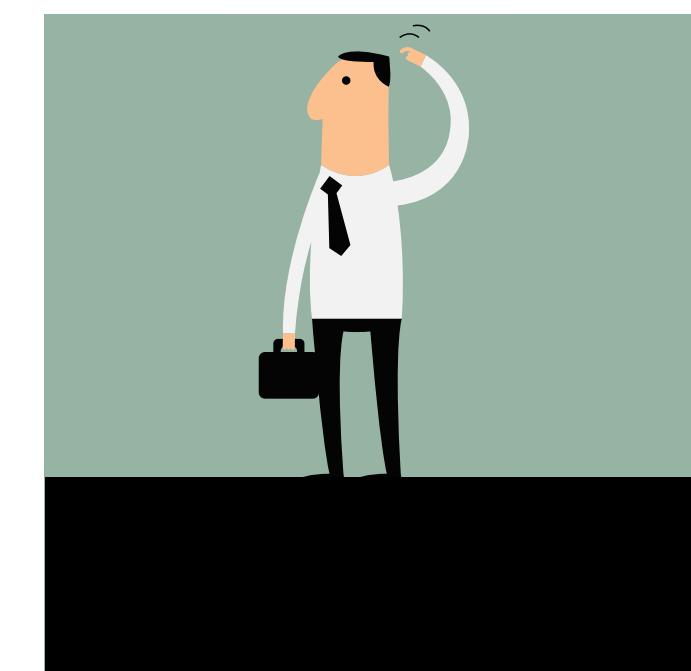
HE DOES HAVE MERITORIOUS TODDNESS...

SUPERIOR TODDITUDE.



AMUELER 2017

African Art Exhibited at FARA



Wanda Washington, a Civil Service employee, poses with several pieces of African art from her collection, displayed at the Foreign Affairs Recreation Association's Vendors Corner at Main State. The hand-carved African cultural wood masks and tribal wood artifacts were purchased in Côte d'Ivoire, Mali, Nigeria and Senegal. ■

Photo by Michael Gross

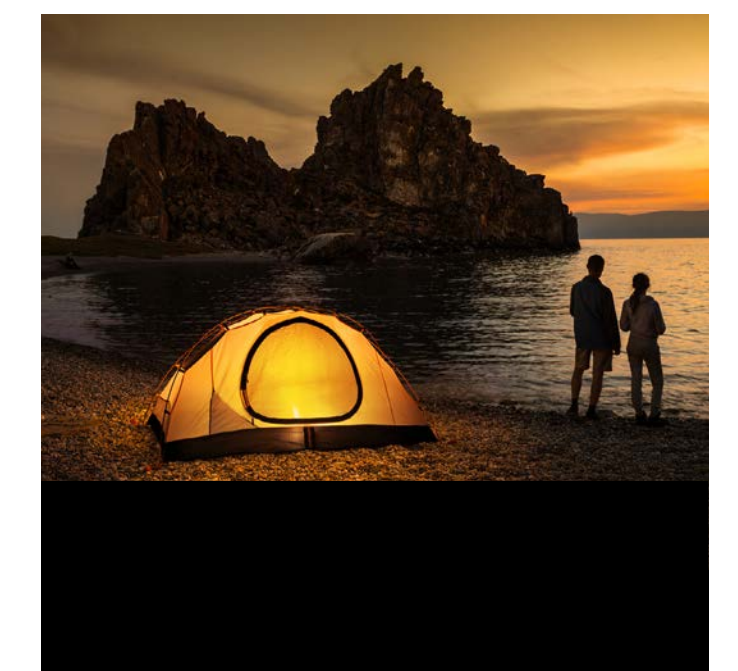
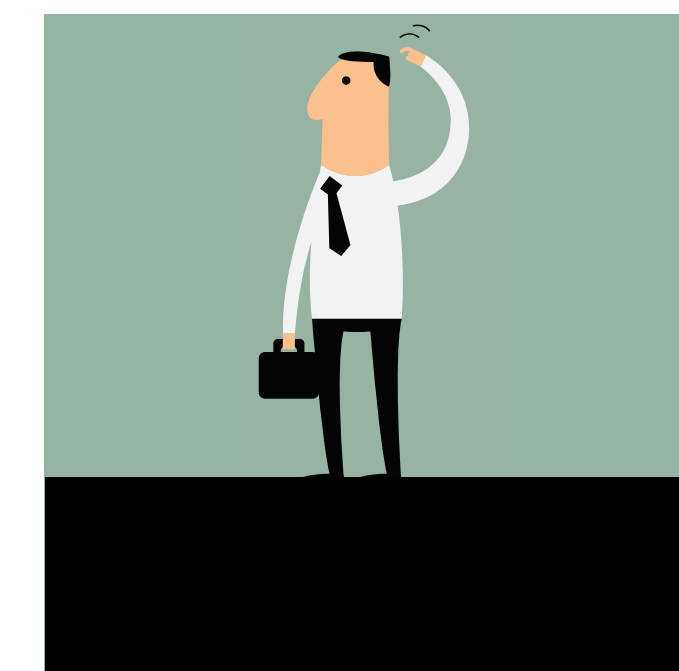
TAP Image
to Read Story

Ambassador Reflects On Her Time in Congo



TeleCongo journalist Nathalie Foundou interviews departing U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Congo Stephanie Sullivan Jan. 19. They discussed areas of mutual cooperation, her impressions about Congo and her priorities and accomplishments. Ambassador Sullivan had also granted Foundou, an IVLP alumnus and a member of a broadcast journalism exchange, an exclusive interview on her arrival in 2014. ■

Photo by Ann M. Perrelli



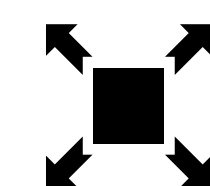
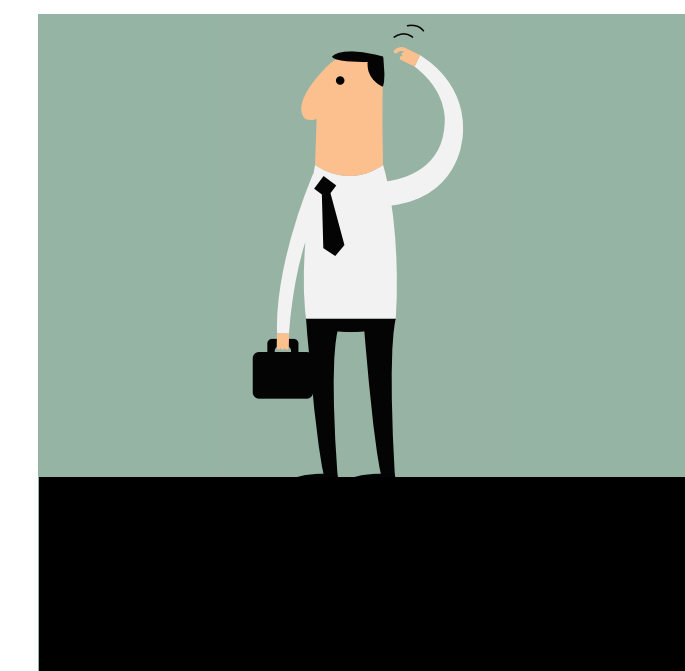

TAP Image
to Read Story

Embassy IO Receives Award



The director and founder of the Baseball Tomorrow Academy, Peter Imonikhe, center left, presents the U.S. Embassy in Abuja's information officer, Russell Brooks, with a plaque showing its appreciation of the embassy's support. The group is a Nigerian nonprofit whose baseball and softball programs empower youth to succeed by promoting positive values, integrity and self-discipline. ■

Photo by Lawrence Nwabata



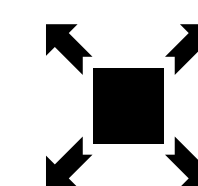
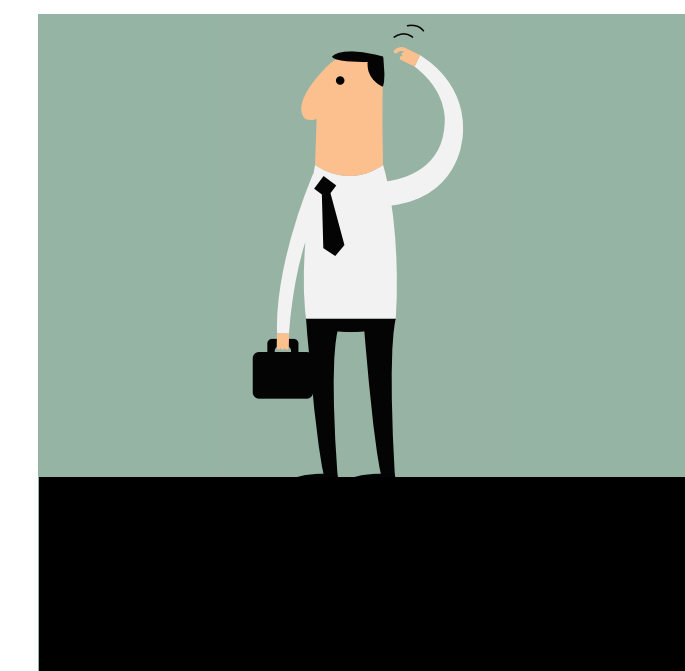
TAP Image
to Read Story

Ambassador to Burkina Faso Meets Local Leaders



Ambassador Andrew R. Young, second from right, walks with the secretary general of the Bobo Muslim Community Association, center, near the grand mosque of Bobo-Dioulasso in February. The new ambassador met with local religious leaders during his first visit to the city as part of the U.S. Embassy in Ouagadougou's regular "American Road Show" series. ■

Photo by Silvere Yameogo



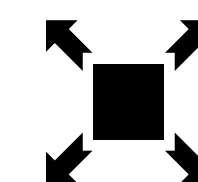
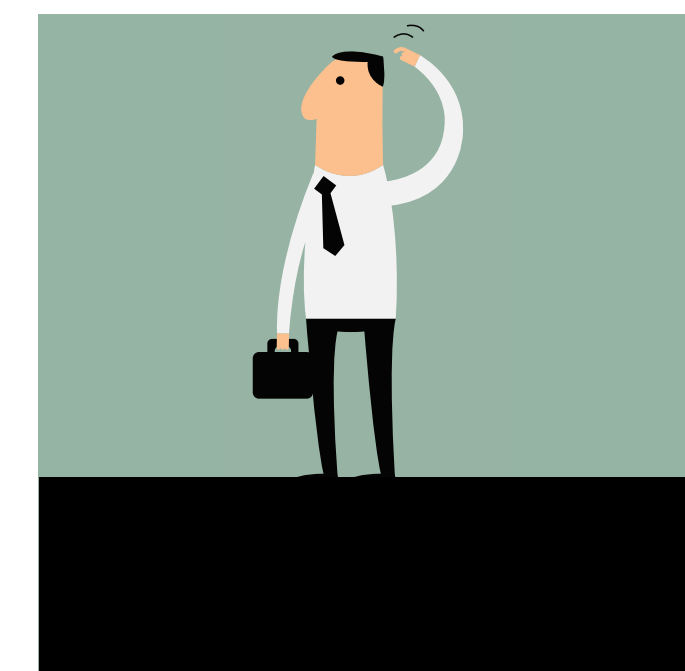
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Ethics Answers

Q: I am a post's public affairs officer, and we are preparing for our Fourth of July celebration. We have received many generous contributions, without which we could not have this celebration. We want to thank and acknowledge our donors on the day of the party. For some of our bigger donors, I was thinking of setting up special one-on-one photo opportunities for representatives of the companies and the ambassador. Would this be permissible?

A: According to 2 FAM 962.8, donors for July fourth events should not receive special recognition keyed to the amount of their contribution. Donor recognition should be limited to a tasteful listing of donor names, perhaps on a modest-sized placard near the entrance of the reception areas and/or in the program. If the chief of mission believes this can be tastefully done, he/she may authorize the display of brand name logos or the like on serving tables, uniforms or in similar places, as long as equal opportunity is given to all entities donating. Keeping with the spirit of the FAM, the solicitation letter should not advertise a special opportunity to meet the ambassador as an incentive for donating. This does not prevent photos featuring the ambassador and guests at the Fourth of July party—including those with donors—but such an opportunity should not be used as a reward or special benefit available only for particular donors.

Ethics Answers presents hypothetical ethical scenarios Department employees might face. For help with real ethics questions, email ethicsattorneymailbox@state.gov



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Retirements

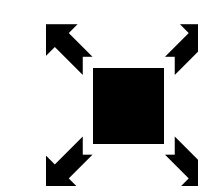
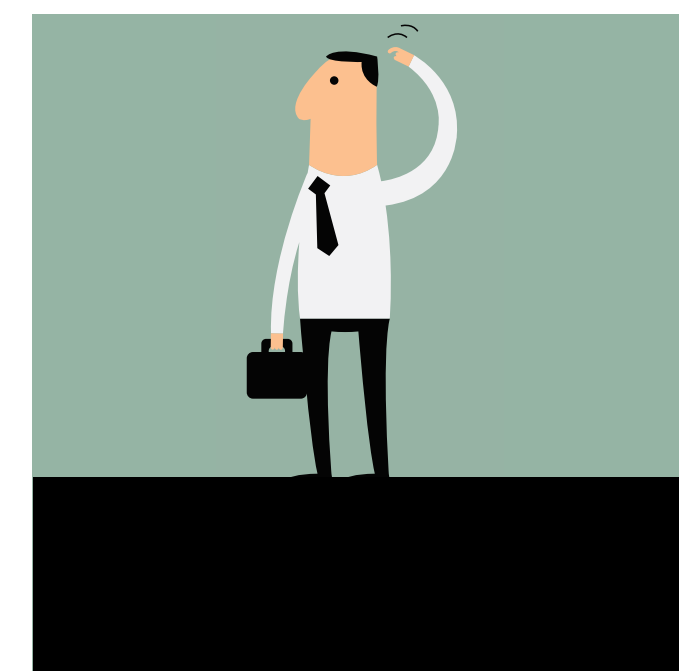
Civil Service

Chandler, Melinda P.
 Dynan, Theresa J.
 Jones, Ronnie G. Thompson
 Kerry, Margaret A.
 Miller, Stephen Maxwell
 Moss, Filmona Lynnette
 Musmar, Hiba F.
 Novelli, Catherine A.
 Powell, Gerald D.
 Powell, Gerald D.
 Rusten, Lynn F.

Sager, Jeffrey Michael
 Sokolsky, Richard D.
 Stearns, Cathy L.
 Swankowski, Steve T.
 Wang, Xueying

Foreign Service

Denne-Bolton, Sara J.
 Mcdermott, Susan A.
 Pagel, Dana L.
 Smith, Gentry O.



TAP Image
 to Read Story

In Memoriam

Cristina

Malcomson

Meserve

Smith

Thayer

Wang

Questions concerning employee deaths should be directed to the Office of Casualty Assistance at (202) 736-4302. Inquiries concerning deaths of retired employees should be directed to the Office of Retirement at (202) 261-8960. For specific questions on submitting an obituary, please contact Ed Warner at warneres@state.gov or (202) 663-2230.



In Memoriam

Lea Maria Kristiina Cristina



Lea Maria Kristiina Cristina, wife of retired FSO Stephen Cristina for more than 43 years, died Jan. 1. A painter in oil, acrylic and water color, she also sculpted in clay and papier machée. She traveled the world, including in France, Spain, Brazil, Holland, Belgium, Albania, Afghanistan and Copenhagen. She instituted an art exchange between Albanian art students and Loyola University-New Orleans. In Afghanistan, she worked for a year in the embassy cultural affairs unit, creating a photo exhibit of the history of U.S.-Afghanistan diplomatic relations. She enjoyed good wine, food and friends, and gardening and reading.



In Memoriam

William G. Malcomson



William G. Malcomson died Feb. 19 in Houston. He began his Civil Service career with the Department in 1962 in the Operations Center. Drafted by the U.S. Army later that year, he served for two years at White Sands Missile Range. In 1964, he returned to the Department where he was assigned to the Bureau of Consular Affairs. His positions in Passport Services included assistant regional director of the Passport office in Washington, D.C., and regional director of the Passport office in Houston. After more than 40 years of service, he retired in 1999 to Houston. He was buried in his hometown of Morgantown, W.V.



In Memoriam

William Michael Meserve

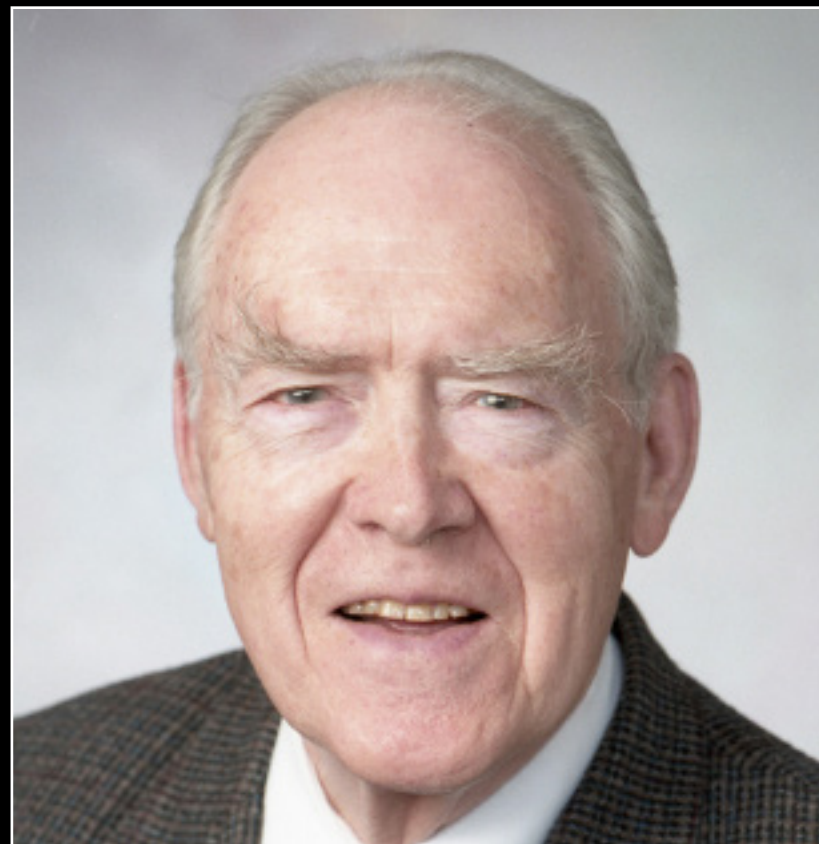


William Michael Meserve, 67, a retired Senior FSO, died at his home in Arlington, Va., Feb. 23 of colon cancer. His 30-year career as a political officer centered on Japan and China, but included extensive work in Korea, India, Indonesia, the Philippines, Mongolia, Thailand, New Zealand and Australia. He was a political advisor to the U.S. Army Pacific, minister-counselor for Political Affairs at the U.S. Embassy in Tokyo, director of the Office of Taiwan Affairs, deputy director and acting director in the Office of Chinese and Mongolian Affairs and consul general in Sapporo, Japan, among other titles. He received Superior Honor awards for mentoring staff, management, analysis and policy implementation. He was fluent in Japanese, proficient in Mandarin and had a strong working knowledge of Cantonese and Russian.



In Memoriam

Donald George Smith



Donald George Smith, 93, of Bethesda, Md died at home on Sept. 24. Smith was a B-29 flight officer in World War II and flew 22 combat missions over Japan. After earning his Ph.D., he joined the Foreign Service in 1951. He served in Pakistan, Egypt and South Korea as a cultural exchange officer, staging a famous photo of Dizzy Gillespie posing as a snake charmer in Karachi in 1956. He was injured protecting U.S. Embassies during riots in Karachi and Cairo. He remained with the Department of State and U.S. Information Agency, wearing a cowboy hat to the office daily until retiring in 1988.



In Memoriam

Harry Elstner Talbott Thayer



Harry Elstner Talbott Thayer, 89, died Jan. 21 in Washington, D.C. He had a distinguished Foreign Service career specializing in U.S.-China relations, beginning in 1956 after serving in the Navy (1945–46). His postings included Hong Kong, Taichung, Taipei, Singapore (ambassador) and AIT Taiwan (director). He also served at the National War College, the U.S. Mission to the U.N. and as dean of FSI's Language School. After retiring in 1989, he became a reemployed annuitant in the Office of Asylum Affairs and on the FOIA Appeals Panel. He volunteered for the homeless, savored the outdoors and relished time with family and friends.



In Memoriam

David Wei-Tse Wang



David Wei-Tse Wang, 91, a retired FSO, died on Feb. 22 in San Ramon, Calif., after a brief illness. A native of China, he moved to the United States in 1948. Wang worked in Chinese-language broadcasting with the Voice of America, starting in 1951, and in 1965 joined the Foreign Service, where he worked until retirement in 1986. He served in Vientiane, Manila, Hong Kong, Munich and Madras, and did two tours in Washington, D.C. In retirement, he moved to California in 1997 to be near family. He was an enthusiastic tennis player, skier and golfer and enjoyed travel, cruises and a good martini. He was also passionate about politics and a great defender of the United States.



End State

Sanxiantai is an area containing a beach and several islands located on the coast of Chenggong Township, Taitung County, Taiwan. The beach stretches for 10 kilometers in length. A popular tourist attraction for its rocky coastal views, the area is well known for its long footbridge that connects the coast to the largest island.

Photo by Alexander Synaptic

